

the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes 32 and 33. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on each of those votes.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 32 and 33, for personal reasons, I was unable to be in the chamber when the time elapsed on the vote.

Had I been able to vote, I would have voted "yea" for both votes.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from leading a Congressional delegation trip to Iraq and due to an unavoidable delay, I was unable to be on the House Floor for rollcall votes 32 and 33. Had I been here I would have voted "yea" for rollcall vote 32, and "yea" for rollcall vote 33.

#### INVESTIGATE HAITI CLAIMS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, needless to say, all of our eyes have been focused on a small little nation just south of this great Nation. Small though it may be, Haiti stood alongside Americans in their fight for independence, and Haiti stands this 200th year as an independent democratic nation.

As we read the Nation's headlines, we see Haitians struggle to pull their nation out of chaos, and then the most tragic statement came this weekend when words were stated by President Aristide that someone, this Nation, allegedly forced him to leave his beloved nation, forced him to leave his position as the duly elected president of Haiti.

I believe this Congress cannot sit in silence. So I am asking the Speaker and the leader of the House to convene major congressional investigations that will include a number of committees, and, in particular, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

We must know the truth of the CIA's involvement, who directed the military, and what occurred on that fateful night. America has the responsibility to take the high moral standard. And even though Haiti is not Iraq, Haiti is still a country that we should feel for. Haiti asked us to come in peace, but it seems as if we came in war. An investigation is necessary and we must do it now.

#### IN HONOR OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Texas' Independence Day, March 2, 1836, the day that Texas declared its independence from Mexico.

On that fateful day, the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico was signed by State delegates and began Texans' journey to joining the United States in 1845. As all Texans know, this was not a calm time or serene event. Indeed, as the delegates prepared the very document itself, the Alamo, the famous mission in San Antonio, and our ancestors were literally under siege by the Mexican army. And as all Americans know, the battle of the Alamo was one of the greatest in American history where 189 brave Texans gave their lives, pushing back around 1,600 opposing soldiers in what became the strategic turning point in the ultimate and successful push for Texas independence.

Mr. Speaker, as we pause again to commemorate Texas on its most important anniversary, I also rise to recognize the countless important contributions that Texans have given to our great Nation since those tumultuous times. Thousands of brave Texas men and women, including many from the Ninth District, bravely serve in our armed forces, and Texas continually produces great civic and business leaders, strongly promotes the arts, and proudly serves as an international hub of commerce and culture.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the great State of Texas on this momentous occasion, to honor all the heroes who gave their lives so that Texas eventually won its hard-fought independence, and to salute Texans who defend our Nation and promote peace and America's interests worldwide.

#### MARK MCCLELLAN: THE WRONG MAN FOR THE JOB

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Madam Speaker, Members of this body should be alarmed that Secretary Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, named Food and Drug Commissioner Dr. Mark McClellan, a vocal opponent of importing drugs from Canada, to lead a government study of reimportation. This decision is a bad one and is a slap in the face of 243 Members of Congress who voted in support of the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act.

As head of the FDA, Dr. McClellan has vehemently opposed the importation of drugs from Canada. Despite the assurance of Secretary Thompson that the study will be balanced and fair, with Dr. McClellan at the helm there is no way this study will be seen as objective. With the proper effort and tech-

nology, it is clearly possible for pharmaceuticals to be safely reimported from Canada and from other countries. American consumers are now asked to subsidize the consumers in the rest of the world by the prices we are charged. This is an issue that will not go away.

Madam Speaker, in closing, no matter what barriers they erect and excuses the FDA or drug companies offer, Americans will continue to search for the much lower drug prices found everywhere else in the world.

[From the Omaha World Herald, Mar. 1, 2004]

#### CHOOSE SOMEONE ELSE

The Bush administration on Wednesday took a step toward establishing a common-sense policy on importing prescription drugs from Canada. Then it took two steps back. That's no way to reach a reasonable policy on a highly significant issue.

Good: Officials announced a year-long study of how drugs could be safely imported from Canada, where the prices can be 60 percent or more lower than U.S. citizens pay. Importation is technically against the law, but many senior citizens, some encouraged and even aided by their local or state governments, do it anyway. The saving is significant for those on fixed incomes and the risks appear minimal.

Bad: U.S. officials appointed Dr. Mark B. McClellan, recently nominated to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to lead the study. McClellan has been a vocal and vehement opponent of any change in the rules that prohibit drug imports, and his agency has threatened legal action against local and state governments that help seniors.

In the Senate, Democrats and some Republicans have objected. "Putting the fox in charge of the chicken house," observed Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D. McClellan has already shown "a personal bias" against drug importation, said a spokeswoman for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

Health and Human Services Department leaders promised a balanced commission and a thorough study of the issue. But Director Tommy Thompson has launched a leaky ship with serious holes in its credibility merely by appointing McClellan to captain it.

Drug importation distresses the pharmaceutical industry for obvious reasons. The Canadian government regulates prescription prices. In the recent Medicare reform bill that would give senior citizens a prescription drug benefit in 2006, Congress forbade the federal government from negotiating for lower drug prices for Americans. That is industry-friendly to the extreme.

So is the appointment of McClellan to such a sensitive post. The administration shouldn't squander the opportunity to settle this contentious issue in a rational manner. And it shouldn't squander its credibility by so blatantly stacking the deck. A more objective professional should be chosen.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.